

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 01166 231732Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

AFSC ANDREWS AFB

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS DA

SUBJ: LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER DEVELOPMENTS: DEFENSE MINISTER

SUPPORT THE F-16 WHILE AWAITING OUTCOME OF

DUTCH-BELGIAN TALKS

REF: COPENHAGEN 1149

SUMMARY. DANISH DEFENSE MINISTER MOLLER REITERATED THAT

THE "UNCERTAINTY" CREATED BY BILATERAL DUTCH-BELGIAN

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PAGE 02 COPENH 01166 231732Z

TALKS ON THE LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER HAD TO BE CLEARED AWAY

BEFORE A DANISH GOVT DECISION COULD BE MADE. (THE AMBASSADOR INTENDS TO SEEK FURTHER CLARIFICATION FROM MOLLER.) SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARIANS TOLD US THEY REGARD THE MINISTER'S REMARKS PRIMARILY AS A TACTIC TO PRESS THE DUTCH AND BELGIANS TO AN EARLY DECISION FOR THE F-16. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RADICAL PARTY CONFIRMED TO US THAT HIS PARTY CANNOT SUPPORT AN AIRCRAFT COMMITMENT NOW BUT IMPLIED IT WOULD BE APPROVED BY PARLIAMENT IN ANY CASE. END SUMMARY.

1) TODAY'S DANISH PRESS GIVES EXTENSIVE PLY TO DEFENSE MINISTER ORLA MOLLER'S STATEMENTS REPORTED REFTEL. HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING: "IN DENMARK AND NORWAY WE FIND IT VERY STRANGE THAT DEFENSE MINISTERS FROM OUR COUNTRIES HAVE NOT BEEN INVITED TO NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM. WE HAVE NOW DECIDED TO AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS."

"THE OFFERS FOR AIRCRAFT WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM SWEDEN, FRANCE AND THE US ALL ASSUME THE SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO ALL FOUR COUNTRIES. WHEN THIS CONDITION NO LONGER EXISTS (BECAUSE OF THE BILATERAL CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE PART OF BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS), IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO RENEGOTIATE ALL OFFERS, BUT I ALSO NOTE THAT RENEGOTIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE SINCE WE HAVE A BUYERS MARKET. DENMARK AND THE OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE ALL RECEIVED A NEW OFFER FOR THE BRITISH FIGHTER OF THE JAGUAR TYPE. HOWEVER, THE OFFER ONLY QUOTES THE PRICE, BUT DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY COMPENSATION OFFERS AND PREVIOUSLY THE AIRCRAFT WAS ASSESSED LOWER THAN THE OTHER THREE. BUT IT MAY BE THE RIGHT THING TO LOOK AT ALL OFFERS AGAIN. AND ADDITIONAL OFFERS MAY BE RECEIVED."

2) THE DANISH PRESS SERVICE IS CURRENTLY CARRYING A DENIAL BY THE DEFENSE MINISTER THAT UNCERTAINTY SURROUNDING THE FIGHTER PLANE PURCHASE IS DUE TO DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE DANISH GOVERNMENT OR THE GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SUCH DISAGREEMENT HAD BEEN ADVANCED AS ONE EXPLANATION OF MOLLER'S STATEMENTS YESTERDAY). HE REPEATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE DUTCH-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 COPENH 01166 231732Z

BELGIAN DECISION ON BILATERAL TALKS HAD CAUSED SOME UNCERTAINTY WHICH FIRST HAD TO BE CLEARED AWAY BEFORE A DANISH GOVERNMENT DECISION COULD BE MADE. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE F-16 WAS "BEYOND COMPARISON" AS FAR AS MAINTENANCE COSTS AND OFFSET OFFER WERE CONCERNED.

3) THE AMBASSADOR HAS REQUESTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH MOLLER IN ORDER TO SEEK FURTHER CLARIFICATION F THE

DANISH POSITION. IN THE MEANTIME, KEY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARIANS TOLD EMBOFF THAT THERE ARE, IN FACT, SOME PROBLEMS WITHIN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OVER THE DECISION TO BUY ANY LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER NOW. ABOUT TEN OF THE PARTY'S 53 PARLIAMENTARIANS OPPOSE THIS PURCHASE BUT OUR CONTACTS DO NOT REGARD THIS OPPOSITION AS "SERIOUS" AND BELIEVE THAT A FAVORABLE DANISH PARLIAMENTARY DECISION WILL STILL BE TAKEN BEFORE THE MAY 15 DEADLINE.

4) THESE CONTACTS ALSO INTERPRETED THE DEFENSE MINISTER'S REMARKS PRIMARILY AS A TACTIC TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE DUTCH AND THE BELGIANS TO REACH AN EARLY FAVORABLE DECISION IN BEHALF OF THE F-16.

5) THE ECONOMIC COUNSELOR OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY HERE TOLD ECONCOUNS THAT, LIKE HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE OTHER CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES, THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR HERE SOUGHT AND RECEIVED AUTHORIZATION TO MAKE A NEW PRESENTATION IN BEHALF OF THE JAGUAR TO MOLLER WHICH HE DID ON APRIL 21. THE THRUST OF THE PRESENTATION WAS THAT THE BRITISH DID NOT PRETEND THAT THE JAGUAR POSSESSED THE SAME CAPABILITIES AS THE THREE PRINCIPAL CONTENDERS FOR THE CONSORTIUM DECISION BUT THAT IF IT WERE NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE CONSORTIUM TO REACH A COMMON DECISION AND CHEAPER ALTERNATIVES WERE BEING SOUGHT, THE BRITISH WERE ANXIOUS TO BE SURE THAT THE JAGUAR OPTION WAS NOT OVERLOOKED.

6) RADICAL PARTY LEADER HILMER BAUNSGAARD TODAY CONFIRMED TO DCM AND POLCOUNS THAT HIS PARTY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT A DECISION NOW TO BUY ANY AIRCRAFT FOR DELIVERY FIVE YEARS HENCE AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO BE PART OF THE PRESENT DEFENSE AGREEMENT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 COPENH 01166 231732Z

WHICH EXPIRES IN 1977, IF SUCH A DECISION WERE, IN FACT, TAKEN. (COMMENT: THIS WOULD MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT A NEW AGREEMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED WITH DIFFERENT PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT, A MOVE THAT IS FAVORED BY AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS OF BOTH THE LIBERAL AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES.) BAUNSGAARD SAID THERE WOULD ALSO BE SOME PROBLEMS WITHIN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OVER A PURCHASE DECISION NOW BUT, LIKE OUR SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SOURCES, HE BELIEVED A MAJORITY IN FAVOR OF THE FIGHTER NOW EXISTS IN THE PARLIAMENT. CROWE

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